

Principles and Practice of Periodontics with an Atlas of Treatment. M Wentz (ed) pp 304 \$35 Springfield, Ill.: Charles C Thomas 1978

This nicely bound textbook was received for review with a feeling of anticipation, bearing in mind that its editor was one of the last remaining members of the 'Vienna School', whose enormous contributions to the field of periodontics have largely formulated the subject as it is today.

The atlas, with contributions largely by members of the University of Nebraska College of Dentistry, fails to match its editor's pedigree in many respects. Far too much emphasis is placed on line diagrams and drawings, many of which are poor in explaining their subject. For example, those related to indications and contra-indications of gingivectomy and descriptions of frenectomy and free gingival grafts. In addition, much that is of importance is left out: the handling of palatal flaps, also tuberosity and retromolar areas for example. Diagrams relating to osseous surgery are limited to the treatment of inconsistent margins, and the treatment of other types of bony lesion are totally ignored. The one excellently documented chapter entitled 'Periodontal Consideration in Removable Partial Denture Design', tends therefore to stand out.

The control of plaque infection is relegated to the back of the book and no indices are given for its evaluation or that of gingival health. The references in this section seem to stop at 1971 and the implications of more recent and important clinical trials are not mentioned.

JOHN ZAMET

*Consultant in Periodontics
University College Hospital*

A Physician's Handbook on Orthomolecular Medicine. R J Williams & D K Kalita

pp 199 £8.25 Oxford: Pergamon Press 1978

Orthomolecular, coined by Linus Pauling in 1968, literally means 'right molecule'. 'It is the opinion of some physicians that cellular malnutrition and an inferior diet are the major causes of degenerative diseases in America today', and the treatment consists of extremely large doses of the nutrients in the belief that the patient has large needs.

Much of the book consists of reprints of articles written several years ago consisting of argument rather than evidence. Some of them read very like 'pop' medicine and strike disbelief into the mind of any critical reader, for example: 'vitamin C alleviates pains in the lower back'; 'several investigators have shown that increased intake of vitamin C leads to a decreased incidence of heart disease'; 'I.Q. is proportional to blood vitamin C levels . . . 25 to 30 grams per day orally [1000 times the recommended daily intake] will destroy all viruses'; 'diphtheria has been cured with 30-40 g per day intravenously'. Vitamins E, B6 and many

other nutrients are similarly reported to have curative properties in pharmacological doses because the tissues in those patients need such levels for proper nutrition.

It recalls the 1930s where the recovery of every patient whose treatment had included a vitamin was reported in the literature as a cure by that vitamin, and since they were so dramatic in curing deficiency diseases they were expected to confer proportionately greater benefits, like long life, if given in higher doses.

A E BENDER

*Professor of Nutrition & Dietetics
University of London*

Controversy in Psychiatry. J P Brady & H K H Brodie (ed) pp 1087 £21

Eastbourne: Holt-Saunders 1978

With its scientific foundations so insecure, psychiatry is exposed to controversy on all fronts and at most levels. The editors of this book have capitalized on the situation by selecting 26 controversial topics on which they have commissioned essays from a number of authors with differing viewpoints. Unfortunately, each contributor appears to have prepared material in ignorance of the alternative or conflicting views expressed by his sparring partner so that the sum effect is one of shadow boxing, with referees' comments from the editors providing summaries rather than verdicts. Furthermore, some of the issues are unlikely to be of much concern outside North America: for example the role of hypnosis in psychiatric training, the need of psychiatrists to receive a medical education and the adoption of children by homosexuals. Bookmaking of this type needs more bite and direction to justify itself, especially when the price is so high.

M SHEPHERD

*Professor of Epidemiological Psychiatry
Institute of Psychiatry*

Adolescent Dermatology (Major Problems in Clinical Paediatrics, vol 19) L M Solomon *et al.* pp 485 £25.75 Eastbourne: Saunders 1978

With adolescence ranked as one of the healthiest periods in the life cycle of the average Westerner, the need for a work of some 450 pages devoted to skin diseases in adolescents hardly arises, even though acne is now the commonest medical problem in the adolescent and young adult of these populations. However, it is of some interest that gonococcal infection seems now to give rise to systemic and local complications rarely encountered in this age group in the past; this suggests that the nutrition and/or immune state of the infected individuals or their community has been considerably altered, possibly as a result of drug-taking. There is an excellent bibliography.

E J MOYNAHAN

Consultant Dermatologist, Guy's Hospital